Update on the Public Comment Process

LisaBeth Barajas, Executive Director,
Community Development Division

Michelle Fure, Public Involvement Manager,
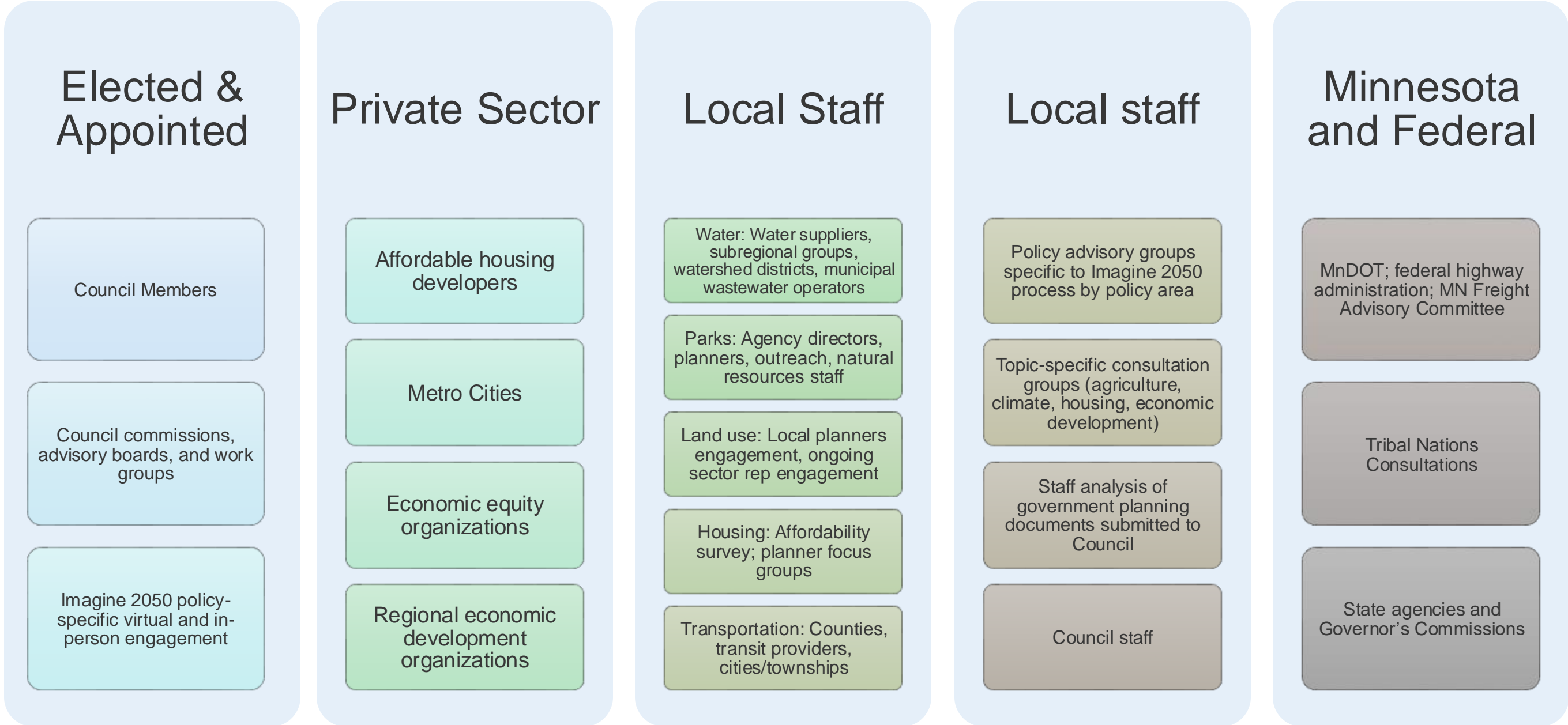Communications

November 13, 2024

Imagine 2050 Engagement Approach
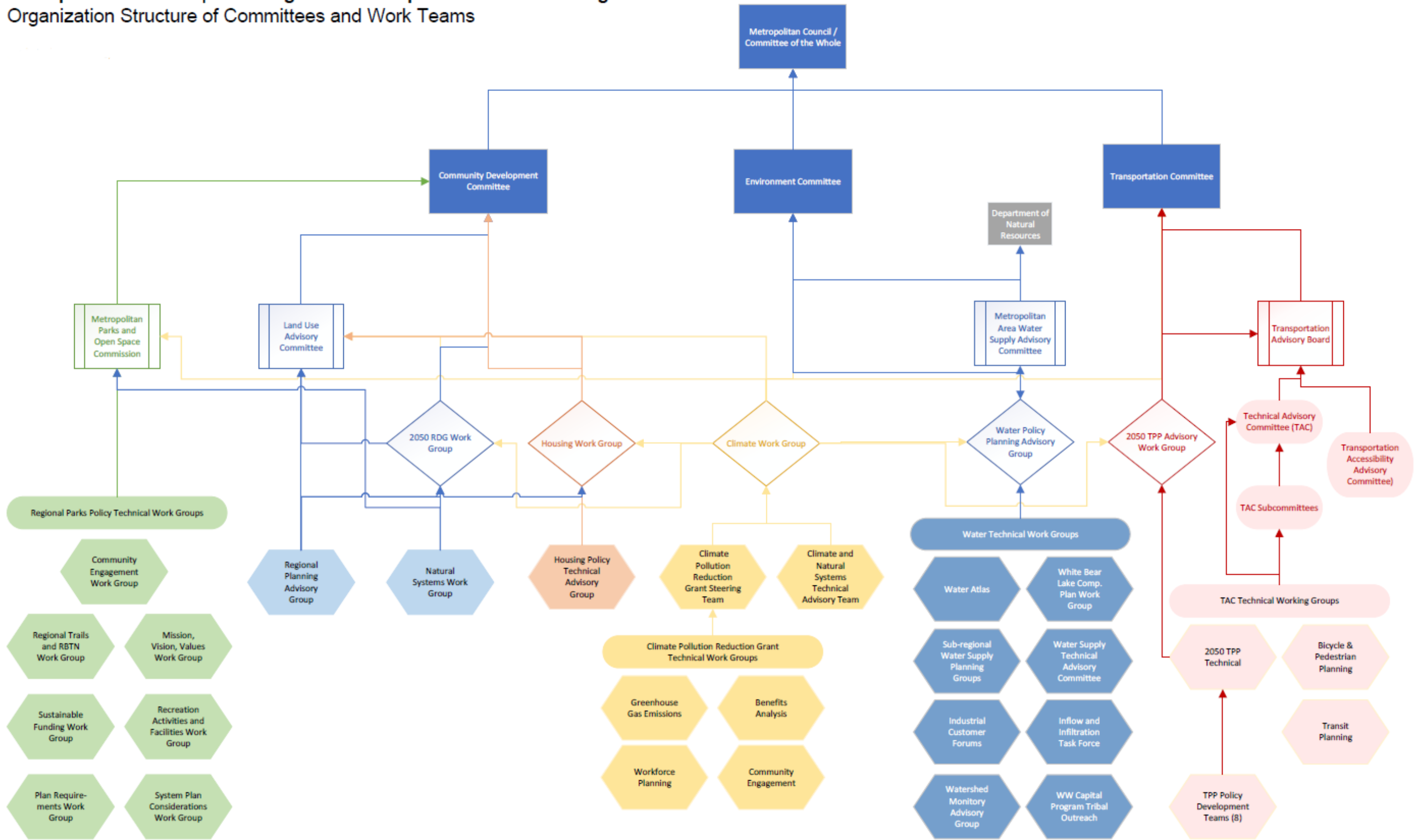
Studies and engagement approaches

- Contributing studies and plans - Transportation, Regional Parks Visitor Study, Water Values Study, 2040 Comprehensive Plan Composite, annual reports on development trends, and many more

- Listening sessions, focus groups, workshops, surveys

- Formal policy cohorts (Young Leaders Collaborative and Community Leaders Collaborative)

- American Indian Advisory Council

- Conversations with groups as requested, such as Metro Cities policy committees, Municipal Legislative Commission, Regional Council of Mayors, and others

- Art + Policy engagement

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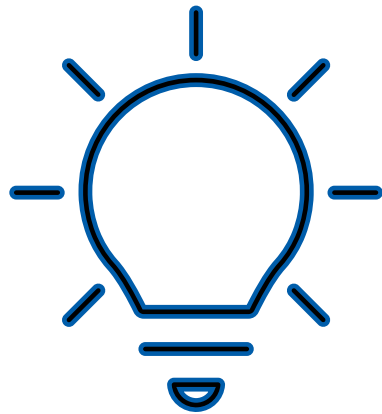
Regular and ongoing engagement

Elected & Appointed

- Council Members
- Council commissions, advisory boards, and work groups
- Imagine 2050 policy-specific virtual and in-person engagement

Private Sector

- Affordable housing developers
- Metro Cities
- Economic equity organizations
- Regional economic development organizations

Local Staff

- Water: Water suppliers, subregional groups, watershed districts, municipal wastewater operators
- Parks: Agency directors, planners, outreach, natural resources staff
- Land use: Local planners engagement, ongoing sector rep engagement
- Housing: Affordability survey; planner focus groups
- Transportation: Counties, transit providers, cities/townships

Local staff

- Policy advisory groups specific to Imagine 2050 process by policy area
- Topic-specific consultation groups (agriculture, climate, housing, economic development)
- Staff analysis of government planning documents submitted to Council
- Council staff

Minnesota and Federal

- MnDOT; federal highway administration; MN Freight Advisory Committee
- Tribal Nations Consultations
- State agencies and Governor's Commissions

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Metropolitan Council | 2050 Regional Development Guide Planning Process
Organization Structure of Committees and Work Teams

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Metropolitan Council / Committee of the Whole

Community Development Committee

Environment Committee

Transportation Committee

Department of Natural Resources

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Land Use Advisory Committee

Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee

Transportation Advisory Board

2050 RDG Work Group

Housing Work Group

Climate Work Group

Water Policy Planning Advisory Group

2050 TPP Advisory Work Group

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee)

TAC Subcommittees

Regional Parks Policy Technical Work Groups

Community Engagement Work Group

Regional Trails and RBTN Work Group

Mission, Vision, Values Work Group

Sustainable Funding Work Group

Recreation Activities and Facilities Work Group

Plan Require-ments Work Group

System Plan Considerations Work Group

Regional Planning Advisory Group

Natural Systems Work Group

Housing Policy Technical Advisory Group

Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Steering Team

Climate and Natural Systems Technical Advisory Team

Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Technical Work Groups

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Benefits Analysis

Workforce Planning

Community Engagement

Water Technical Work Groups

Water Atlas

White Bear Lake Comp. Plan Work Group

Sub-regional Water Supply Planning Groups

Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee

Industrial Customer Forums

Inflow and Infiltration Task Force

Watershed Monitory Advisory Group

WW Capital Program Tribal Outreach

TAC Technical Working Groups

2050 TPP Technical

Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning

Transit Planning

TPP Policy Development Teams (8)

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A collaborative, iterative framework

Ideas are brought forward from data, analysis, local plans, conversations with partners, people in the region, industry experts

Advisory committees, technical teams, and working groups with members from local governments, partner organizations, and Met Council members worked together to create solutions

We created recommended policies together, refined them through engagement and feedback, and adjusted based on experience, data, and additional analysis

Imagine 2050 Public Comment Period

- Public comments for Imagine 2050 (all policy areas) were accepted from **August 15 to October 7**.
- Comments accepted in multiple forms:
  - Online via engage.metrocouncil.org
  - Email
  - Mail
  - In-person (Art + Policy events, community events, and Public Hearing)
- Received more than 1,200 comments from approximately 500 organizations and individuals.

Who have we heard from?

Imagine 2050 public comments

Overall participation data

- 7 counties
- 58 cities
- 12 non-profit/advocacy organizations
- 2 state agencies
- 1 federal agency
- 2 regional parks agencies (in addition to cities and counties)

Other details

- In person comments – 133
- Public hearing testifiers – 12
- Online portal contributors (people) – 240
- Online portal contributions – more than 1,000
- Online portal plan downloads – more than 3,200
  - More than 100 in each of the major policy areas

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Online portal participants

Demographic questions: ethnicity
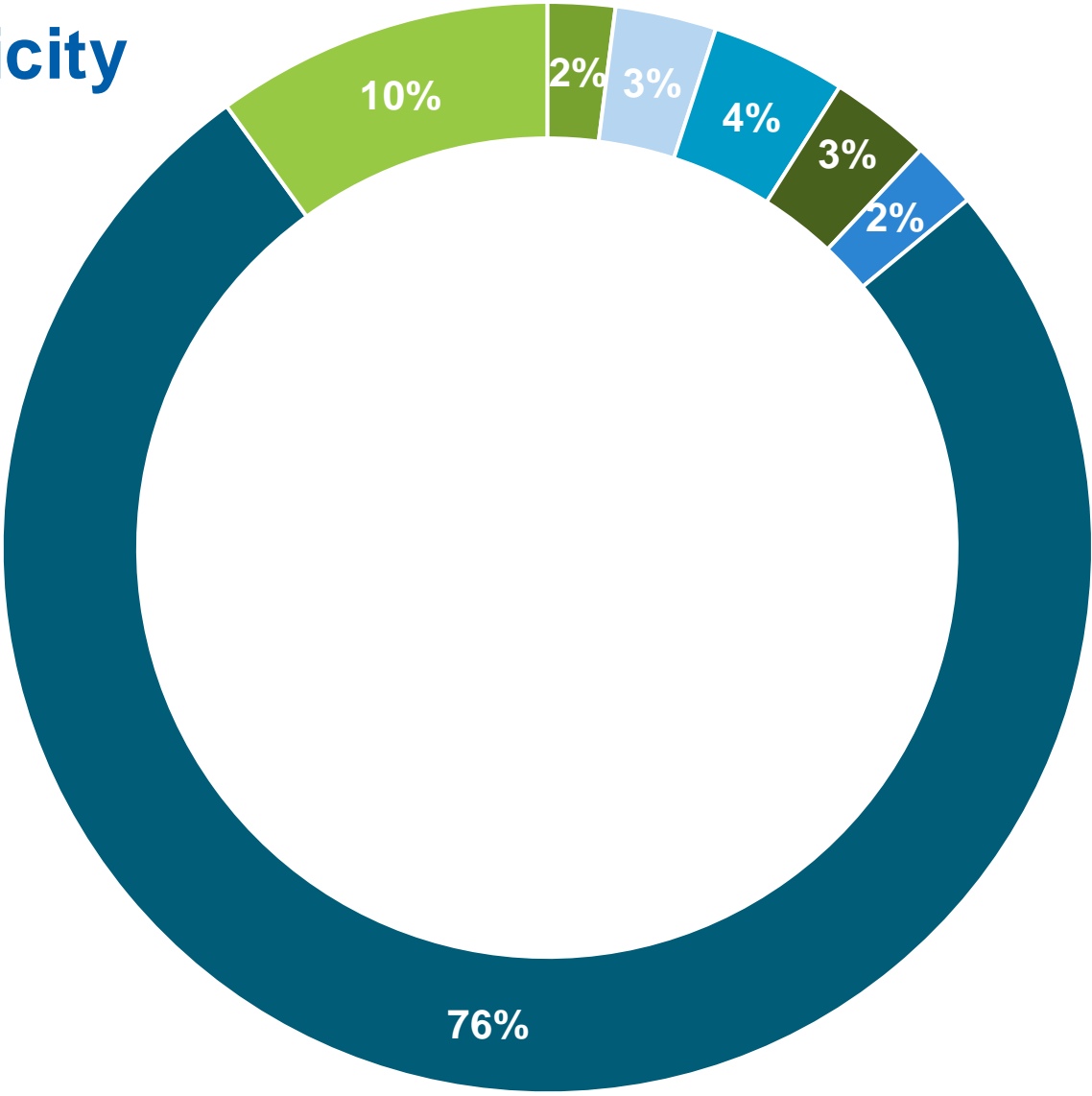
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian or Asian American
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Middle Eastern or North African
- White
- Other

Online portal participants

Demographic questions: gender identity
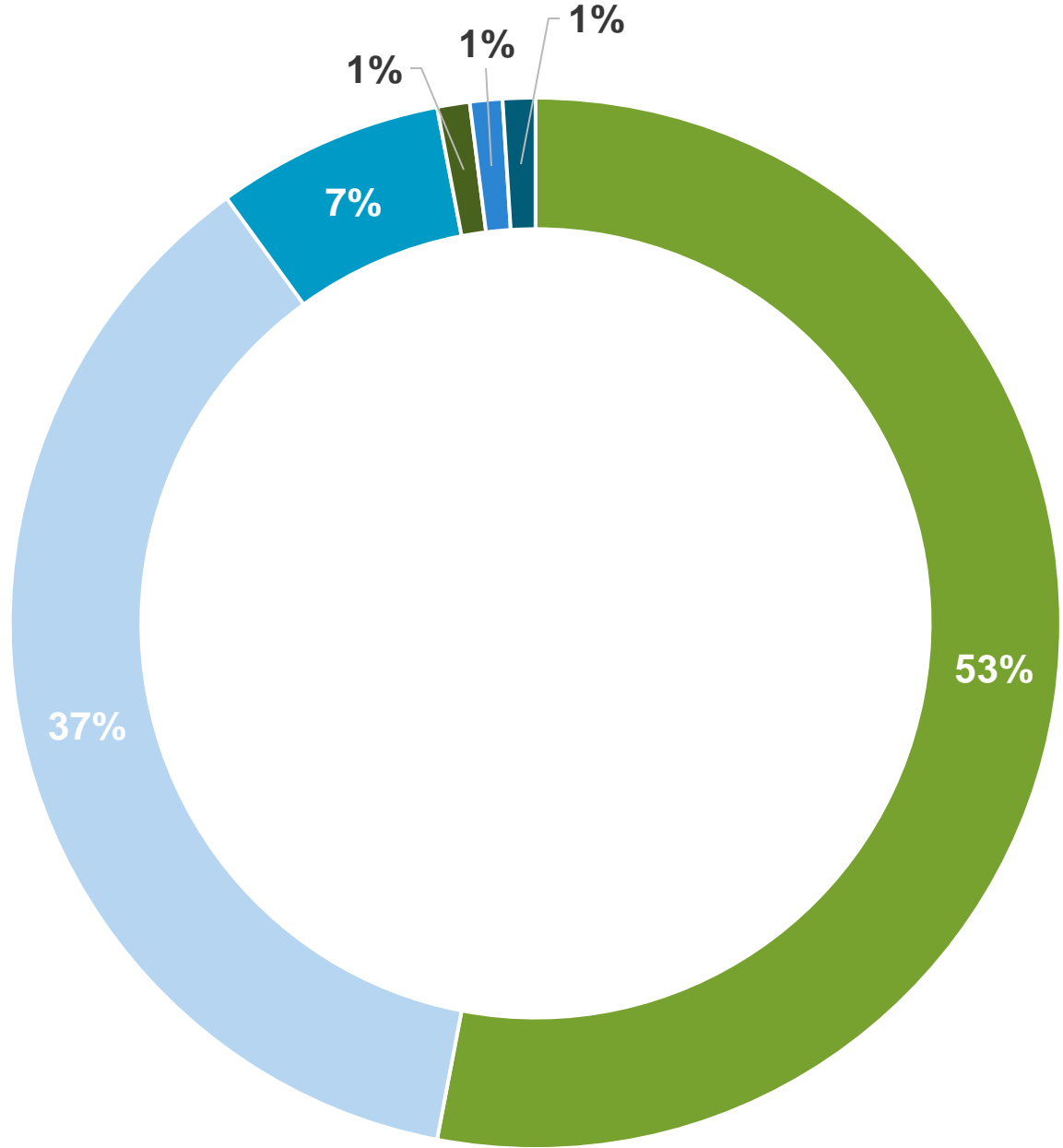
- Man
- Woman
- Prefer not to answer
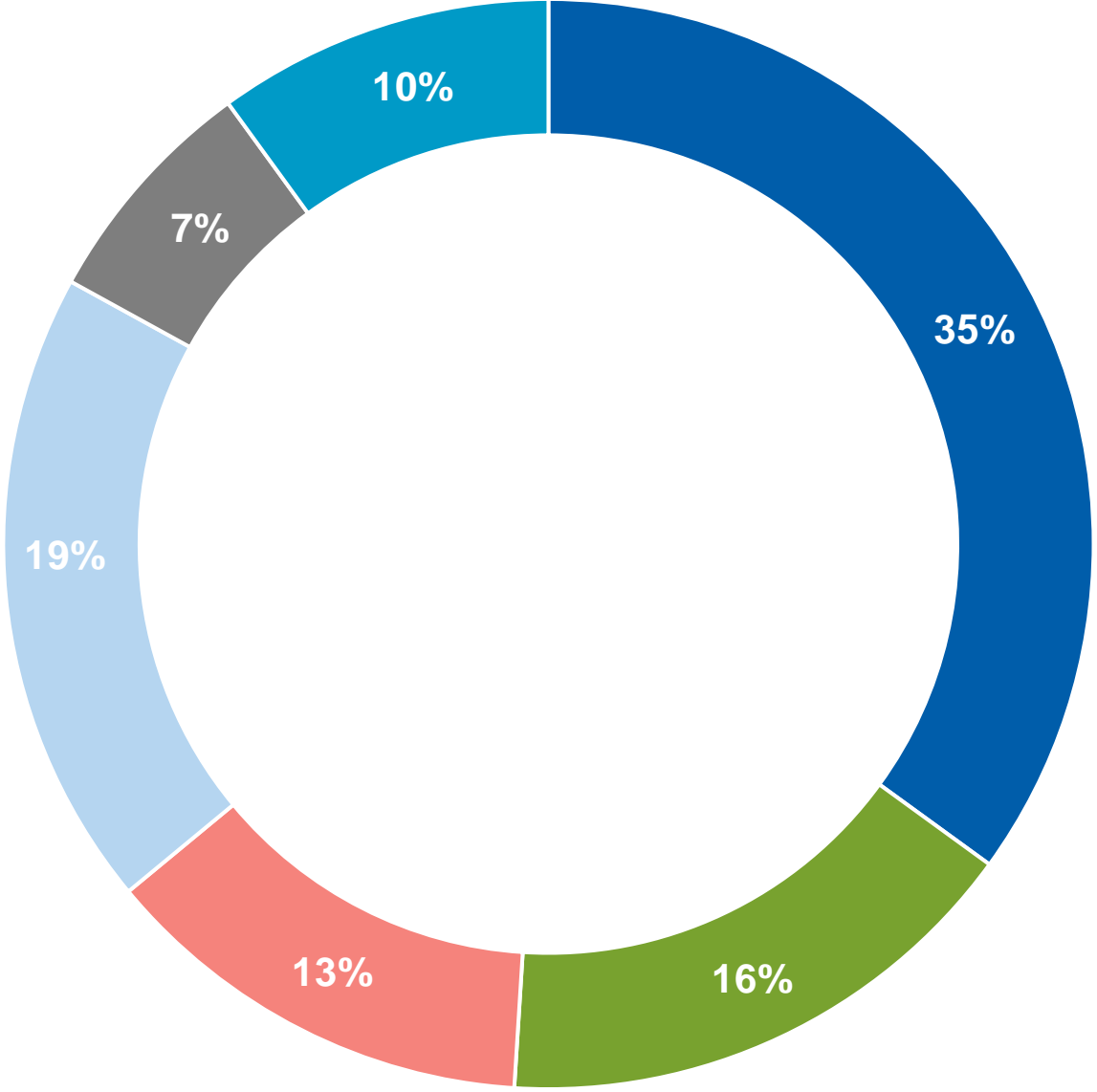- Another gender identity
- Transgender
- Non-binary
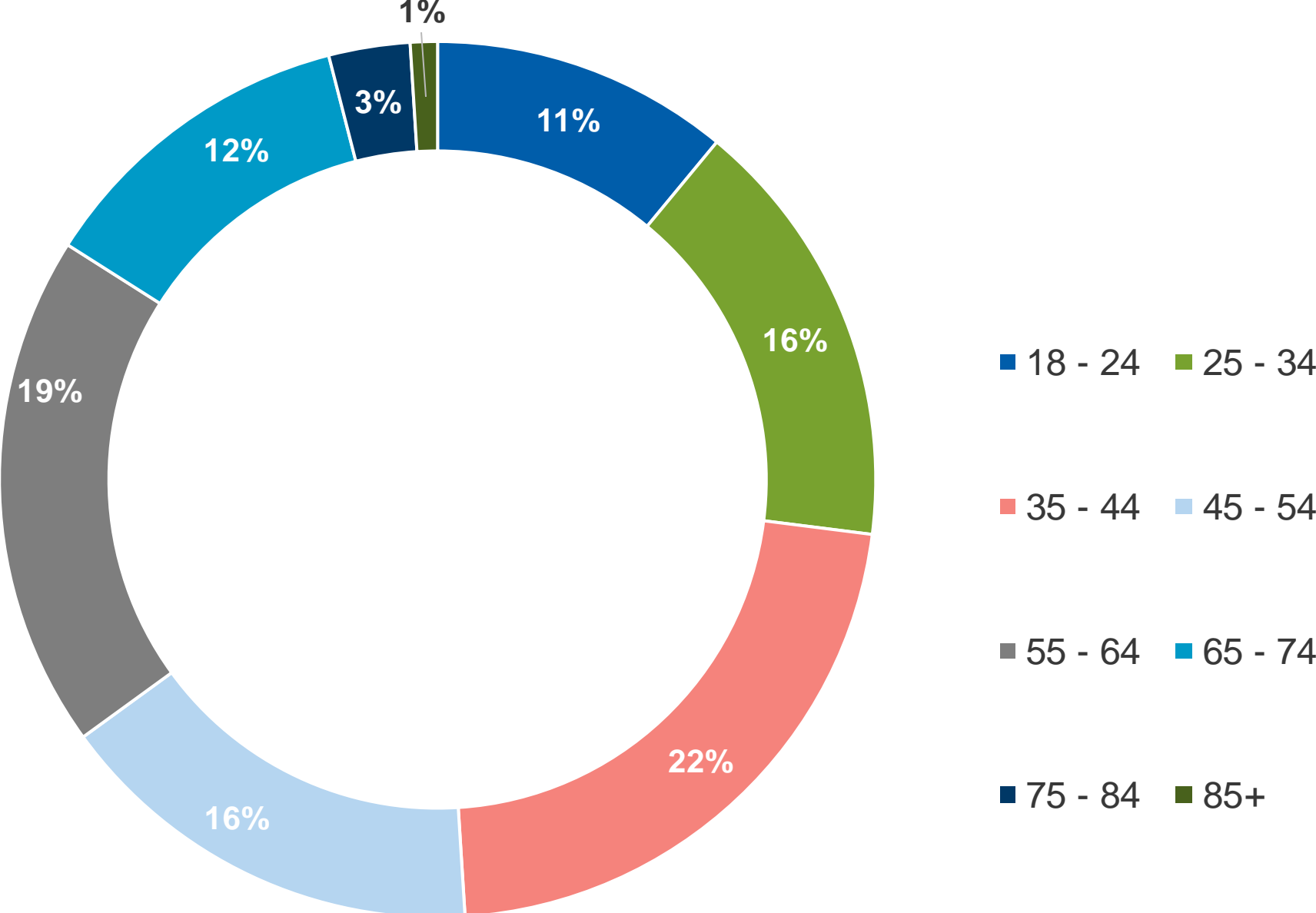
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Online portal participants

Demographic questions: age

Legend:
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75 - 84
- 85+

Chart values: 11%, 16%, 22%, 16%, 19%, 12%, 3%, 1%

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Social media impact

Social media:
- Facebook ads
  - 3,700 clicks
  - 186,000 reached
- Instagram posts
  - 12,000 views
  - 700+ interactions
- Overall engagement increased exponentially because of paid campaign, which makes our organic reach more significant

Facebook – promotions by district

Top policy areas by district

- District 1 – Land Use
- District 2 – Land Use
- District 3 – Land Use/Water/Parks (tie!)
- District 4 – Land Use
- District 5 – Transportation
- District 6 – Land Use/Transportation
- District 7 – Transportation/Water
- District 8 – Transportation
- District 9 – Transportation/Land Use
- District 10 – Transportation
- District 11 – Land Use

- District 12 – Transportation/Land Use
- District 13 – Parks/Transportation
- District 14 – Housing
- District 15 – Housing/Transportation
- District 16 – Housing/Land Use

Top district per policy area

- Housing – District 14
- Land Use – District 4
- Parks – District 13
- Transportation – District 5
- Water – District 7

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What did we hear?

High Level Themes – Residents

Across all of Imagine 2050

- Generally supportive of the regional vision, values, and goals – comments on whether vision, values and goals resonated with them and their lived experiences.

- Residents wanted to make sure that the needs of disabled people, elders, and youth were served by 2050 policies.

- Overwhelmingly supported climate change mitigation from the Council.

- Cost and affordability were important, including financial access to housing, transportation, and other necessities.

- Residents want the region to be accessible to people with disabilities and compliance with ADA requirements.

- A smaller number of residents provided feedback about specific policy areas, especially Land Use and Transportation. The most frequently commented on policy chapters were Land Use and Transportation

High Level Themes – Local Governments

Across all of Imagine 2050

Support / alignment with regional goals and values

Requests for:

- Clarification of terms and what is required
- Technical assistance / funding support
- Flexibility in implementation
- Collaboration with suggested additional government partners

Concerns:

- Policies are burdensome to communities - local constraints on capacity or funding or both
- Policies are outside of Council authority and take away local control
- More expensive costs for development and housing
- Impacts to historical character or local community character
- Policies are disadvantageous to suburban/rural communities
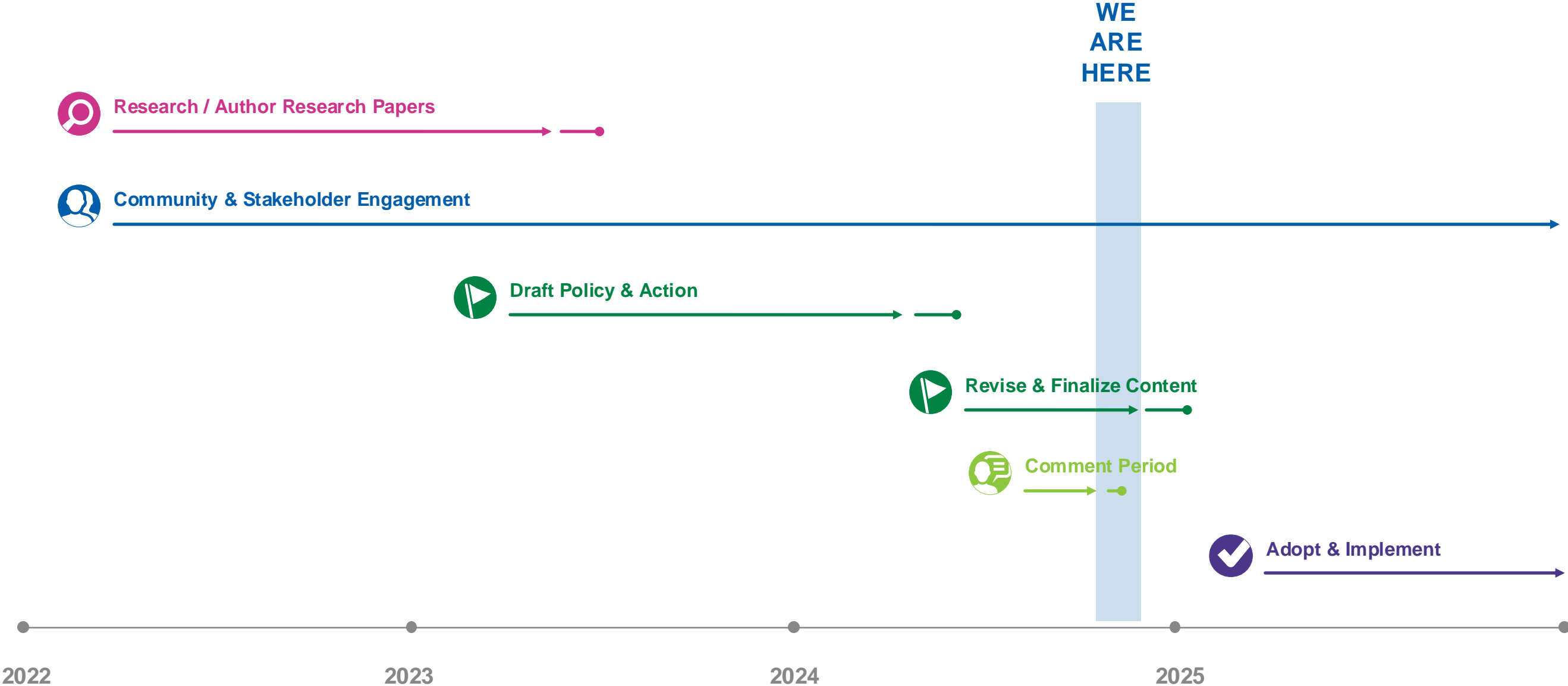- External factors beyond local community control make implementation difficult

High Level Themes – Non-Profit / Advocacy Organizations

Across all of Imagine 2050

- Support for the "direction the Met Council was heading" - particularly around climate and housing.
    - Some organizations even encouraged the Met Council to "go further".
- Provided more high level comments about support or lack thereof for policies. They provided recommendations to strengthen policies from the lens of their organization's mission.
- Often offered specific actions for neighborhood/local-level implementation.
    - Offered insight around tools, funding strategies, and statutes that the Met Council could leverage to further equity-related policies outlined in policy plans.
- While some organizations provided comments by separate policy areas, many advocacy organizations took a more integrated, intersectional approach.
    - Described intersections between the different policy areas and encouraged internal collaboration.

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Plan Timeline

WE
ARE
HERE

Research / Author Research Papers

Community & Stakeholder Engagement

Draft Policy & Action

Revise & Finalize Content

Comment Period

Adopt & Implement

2022   2023   2024   2025

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OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
	11/8 Housing Work Group considers comments	**12/2** CDC considers Housing comments	**1/21** CDC recommends Housing adoption	
	11/20 RDG Work Group considers RDG & Land Use comments	**12/2** CDC considers RDG & Land Use comments	**1/21** CDC recommends RDG & Land Use adoption	
	11/7 MPOSC considers Parks comments **11/18** CDC considers Parks comments	**12/5** MPOSC continued (if needed)	**1/9** MPOSC recommends Parks adoption **1/21** CDC recommends Parks adoption	
	11/6 TAC reviews TPP **11/14** TAC Planning reviews TPP **11/20** TAB reviews TPP	**12/4** TAC reviews TPP **12/9** TC reviews TPP	**1/15** TAB recommends TPP adoption **1/27** TC recommends TPP adoption	
10/23 MAWSAC considers public comments on MWSP		**12/10** EC considers public comments **12/11** MAWSAC approves MWSP	**1/21** EC recommends WPP	
	11/13 MC update on public comment process	**12/18** COW update on local forecasts		**2/12 Council adopts Imagine 2050**
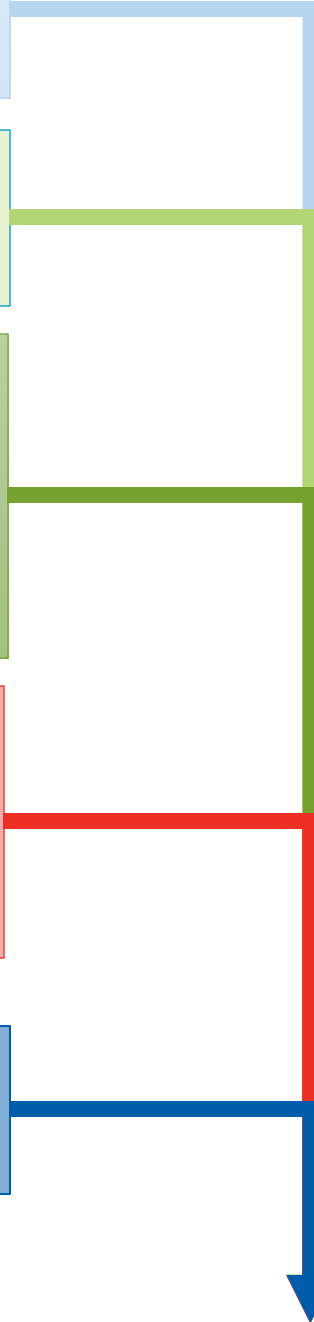
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Learn More

LisaBeth Barajas
Michelle Fure

Thanks to all Met Council staff that contributed to the public comment period and analysis, including:

Karah Barr	Art + Policy Team
Sarah Gong	Regional planning teams
Tammy Livingston Owen	Planning team comment leads:
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	• Angela Torres

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